

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Canceled)

2. (Previously presented) A method of constructing a frameless "hard" suitcase characterized by the steps of forming a base portion and a lid portion from a material of such characteristic that the portions retain their formed shape, and attaching to each of said portions the respective zipped portions of a zip fastener arrangement by a stitching operation involving a securing thread, the lid portion being shaped so as to have a convex main outer surface and the base portion being shaped so as to have a concave main outer surface, the zip fastener arrangement having an expandability feature to permit volume expansion of the suitcase.

3. (Previously presented) A method of constructing a frameless "hard" curvilinear suitcase characterized by the steps of forming a tray like base portion and a tray like lid portion from a material of such characteristics that the base and lid portions retain their intended curvilinear shape, and attaching to the free edge regions of the walls of said tray like portions by a stitching operation using a thread the respective fastener forming sections of a zip fastener arrangement for enabling the base and lid portions to be retained in a suitcase closed condition, the lid portion being shaped so as to have a convex main outer surface and the base portion being shaped so as to have a concave main outer surface, the zip fastener arrangement having an expandability feature to permit volume expansion of the suitcase.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently amended) ~~The method as claimed in claim 4,~~ A method of constructing a "hard" suitcase characterized by forming a shaped base portion and a shaped lid portion from a plastics material of such characteristic that the portions retain their intended

shape, and attaching to each of said portions the respective zipped portions of a zip fastener arrangement by a stitching operation involving a securing thread, the lid portion being shaped so as to have a convex main outer surface and the base portion being shaped so as to have a concave main outer surface, and characterized by providing a capability of increasing the storage volume of the case characterized in that means, for enabling said increase in the closed volume of the suitcase includes a Zip fastener arrangement.

6. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 5, and characterized in that the zip fastener arrangement is a two part Zip fastener arrangement of which a first Zip part is associated with the Zip fastener arrangement involved with opening and closing of the case and a second Zip part is connected with the lid portion of the case.

7. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 6, and characterized by the provision of beading/piping between the first Zip part and the second Zip part.

8. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 6, and characterized in that a first section of the second Zip part stitched to the suitcase lid portion, and the second section of the second Zip part is secured to the first zip section of the first zip fastener part whose second section is secured to the suitcase base portion.

9. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 6, and characterized in that the extent of closed volume increase is determined by the overall separation width of the interconnected sections of the first and second Zip parts of the part Zip fastener arrangement.

10. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 9 and characterized in that a gusset forming strip is provided between the adjoining sections of the first and second Zip fastener parts, and in which the overall increase in the closed volume of the suitcase is determined by the width of the gusset.

11. (Currently amended) The method as claimed in claim [[1]] 5, and characterized by the step of covering in/encapsulating the edge regions of the zip fastener

sections stitched to the base and lid portions by a cover strip that is secured to the associated base and lid portions by the stitching operation involved in securing the associated Zip fastener sections/strips to the base and lid sections of the case.

12. (Original) The method as claimed in claim 11 and characterized in that the cover strip includes a length of an S cross-sectioned plastics/rubber strip into which is inserted the associated Zip fastener section so as to produce a layered formation including a layer of plastics/rubber material immediately adjacent the associated case edge portion, the associated section of a stiffening rib and an outer layer of plastics/rubber.

13. (Currently amended) A "hard" suitcase construction including a base portion and a lid portion, the base and lid portions being formed of a plastics material of such characteristic that the base and lid portions retain their intended shape while at the same time enabling the attachment by a stitching operation of at least one Zip fastener arrangement for the purposes of enabling closure of the case, the lid portion being shaped so as to have a convex main outer surface and the base portion being shaped so as to have a concave main outer surface, and characterized in that two sets of floor engaging support members, there being a set being provided one to each of two transverse surfaces of the suitcase whereby the case can be stood on a support surface in one or the other of two orientations, and characterized by means whereby the volume of the case is expandable, characterized in that the expandability is achieved by providing a two part Zip fastener arrangement of which a first Zip part is associated with the Zip fastener arrangement involved the closing of the case and of which a second Zip part is associated with the expandability of the case.

14. - 16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently amended) The suitcase as claimed in claim ~~16~~ 13, and characterized in that the second Zip part is interposed between the lid second of the case and the section of the Zip fastener arrangement associated with the closure of the case.

18. (Original) The suitcase as claimed in claim 13, and characterized in that elements of one such set are provided upon the base portion and incorporate wheels/rolls whereby the case is rendered towable, and in which at least one other element of this set is located on the lid portion, the arrangement being such as to provide a stable support for the case when not being towed.

19. (Previously presented) The suitcase as claimed in claim 18, and characterized by that side of the base portion that is opposite to the wheels/rolls is provided with a case carrying handle and a retractable towing means.

20. (Previously presented) The suitcase of claim 13, further comprising a cover strip having an S cross-section having first, second and third layers, with an edge region of one of the base and lid portions being situated between the first and second layers and with a woven portion of the zip fastener arrangement of the associated one of the base and lid portions being situated between the second and third layers, a thread of the stitching operation extending through the first layer, the edge region of the associated one of the base and lid portions, and through the woven portion of the zip fastener arrangement but not through the third layer, and the third layer covering the thread but not covering teeth of the zip fastener arrangement.